

# CHAPTER 1

## Courses of democratization in East Asia

### A contribution to the debate...

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As it is widely assumed, the overthrow of Salazar's dictatorship in Portugal in 1974 after the Carnation Revolution triggered the third world wave of democratization. Starting in the south of Europe, the 'third wave' spread rapidly, and swept across Latin America and Asia. In the 1990s, it reached the countries of Eastern Europe and a part of Africa.<sup>1</sup> Many previously authoritarian countries quickly started to fill in the emerging ideological void with liberal-democratic values. Thus, they rejected, formally at least, other non-democratic alternatives of legitimacy of their governments. Some of the supporters of liberal democracy even started to optimistically assume that the democratic rule may have been recognized as the only possible form for the modern societies.<sup>2</sup> Then, Francis Fukuyama prophetically stated that the history of mankind ended with the era of bipolar ideology. According to Fukuyama, the triumphant Western model of liberal democratization was to become the dominant form in the sphere of political organization, and no notion of its alternatives was possible in the future.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the ongoing discourse on the declining dynamics of democratization processes in the modern world, it should be noted that even in its

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Marc F. Plattner, *The Democratic Moment*, in: Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and The Last Man*, New York: Free Press, 1992, p. 45.

global peak, the processes of the 'third wave' had never become a model that would describe the fundamental trends occurring in the political systems of East Asia. Attributing priority meaning to economic development, with a simultaneous strong presence of the factor of nationalism in the public sphere, contributed to the fact that a considerable part of non-democratic Asian countries issued a challenge to the 'Western' visions of doing politics. Therefore, in the 1990s in Asia, theses on the distinctness of 'Asian values' were popular. They were supposed to be an alternative to liberal values of Western communities. Political leaders of East Asia repeatedly stood publicly by the thesis that following the Western developmental model was not only possible, but it was also an alternative to the Asian political and economic model of development.<sup>4</sup> Once these opinions were supplemented with the famous hypothesis of Samuel P. Huntington that the post-cold-war conflicts would more often be a result of cultural diversity and, therefore, take the place of old ideological and economic divisions, one could suppose that the debate on the model of political transformation would dominate the contacts between the West and the East-Asian civilization. One could also expect that it would indirectly influence peace and order of the future international community.

Can the 'Asian values' threaten the progress of the process of global democratization? Opinions on this matter have always been dissenting. Certain Asian scholars, like Amartya Sen, claim that democracy is a cosmopolitan value.<sup>5</sup> According to these scholars, the fact that the leading figures on the Asian political scene maintain the illusion of incompatibility of the Far-Eastern developmental model with the rules of liberal democratization is, to say the least, inappropriate. As a matter of fact, Sen claims, questioning the purposefulness of democratization by certain politicians is a sole result of the attempt to counteract to the rising pressure on reforms of the system of power in their own countries. In this way, some of them also tried to make their authoritarian regimes and the Western systems of power equal, by often supplementing the term 'democracy' with numerous 'adjectives.' The core of the democratic system in terms like 'Confucian democracy,' 'state-controlled democracy,' and 'Asian democracy' succumbs, therefore, to a permanent distortion. In many East Asian countries - Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand in particular - rapid economic growth led to a relatively rapid transformation of the functioning of the social model. The increase of investments, improvement of living conditions, greater social dynamics, and improvement of educational

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<sup>4</sup> Alan Dupont, "Is There an 'Asian Way'," *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 2/1996, pp. 13-33.

<sup>5</sup> Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, No. 3/1999, p. 15.

standards may, however, be directly related to the initial successes of democratic transformation. Although East Asia is a long way from a stable consolidation of democratic structures, the processes may define a permanent direction for the region's political systems.<sup>6</sup>

However, this optimistic vision is not shared by all. Naturally, elements of cultural tradition by no means stop the progress of democratization processes in some of the Asian countries. However, as L. H. M. Lin and Chih-yu Shih suggest, the 'Confucianism with a liberal face' is a more suitable definition of the nature of East-Asian democracy. According to them, democratization processes, even if progressing, in general openly conflict with the systems of values. Hence, the result of political transformation in the countries of the region still remains unknown, while currently it is difficult to determine the proportion between the influence of, to some extent, native Confucian tradition and the influence of the European set of liberal values.<sup>7</sup> The attempts to determine the fate of democratization in Asia are additionally hampered. Donald K. Emmerson draws attention to methodological problems with determining the set of values typical for this particular region. Asia's cultural diversity makes it impossible to put all Asian countries in one logical set, and give them a common collective identity.<sup>8</sup>

Although the future of democratization processes in Asia cannot be fully predicted, one might focus on a less ambitious question, i.e. the influence of traditional systems of values on the dynamics of political transformation processes in the region. One should consider how strongly the modernization and democratization force transformation, and particularly how great an obstacle can Confucianism be for the democratization of the states of the region.

### Three theoretical perspectives

Three basic analysis trends aiming at explaining the nature of mutual relations between traditional Asian values based on Confucianism and political modernization and democratization processes may be pictured. These are the mod-

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<sup>6</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, *Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes*, in: Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela (eds.), *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> L. H. M. Ling and Chih-yu Shih, "Confucianism with a Liberal Face: The Meaning of Democratic Politics in Postcolonial Taiwan," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 60, No. 1/1998, pp. 55-82.

<sup>8</sup> Donald K. Emmerson, "Singapore and the 'Asian Values' Debate," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 4/1995, pp. 95-105; Yi-Huah Jiang, "Asian Values and Communitarian Democracy," *International Workshop on Deliberating the 'Asian Value Debate: National Values, Chinese Values and Muslim Values in Southeast Asia*, Taipei 1998, p. 18.

ernization perspective, concept of cultural relativism, and opinions referring to communitarianism

Supporters of the first model assume that differences in political solutions introduced in the Eastern and Western countries will slowly diminish, as a result of the global modernization processes. Although the supporters of modernization allow for the theoretical part of the 'multitude of modernities' concept, the ongoing discourse on political transformation is invariably dominated by the supporters of a homogeneous model of political modernity, identified with the Western model of democracy. One of the most famous followers of this vision - Francis Fukuyama - referring to the processes occurring in Asia claims that all changes in political institutions (their upper structures) must lead to an inevitable destruction of the traditional Confucian social order (in lower structures). According to the modernists, Confucian culture may successfully be the basis for authoritarian or half-authoritarian regimes in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Singapore; it may also coexist with or even support the democratic systems of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. By rejecting liberal individualism Confucianism simultaneously places education and tolerance, which are easily congruent with the nature of democratic system, high up in the hierarchy of social values.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the reasons some countries in East Asia have adopted democratic systems, while others remained faithful to authoritarian solutions, ought to be sought for somewhere else. According to Fukuyama, the significant level of modernization of certain societies remains the extremely important factor.<sup>10</sup> One of the most prominent researchers in the field of political systems in Asia, Robert A. Scalapino, represents nearly identical opinions on the influence of modernization processes on the shape of political systems of East Asia.<sup>11</sup> Economic development of the region, claims Scalapino, opens the stratification systems, and increases the level of mobilization, and the two processes have a positive influence on the development of democracy.

Marc F. Plattner looks at the modernization process from a slightly different perspective, and points out that democratic regimes are a kind of continuation of liberalism. According to Plattner, this indicates that although liberal concepts in East Asia at the threshold of the 'third wave' of democratization

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<sup>9</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "Confucianism and Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 2/1995, pp. 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, *The Illusion of Asian Exceptionalism*, in: Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Democracy in East Asia*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 224-225.

<sup>11</sup> Robert A. Scalapino, *A Tale of Three Systems*, in: Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Democracy in...*, p. 230.

seemed almost absent, they would grow with strength along with the progress of economic development, and in turn generate the modernizational political transformation.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, as Gerald L. Curtis claims, although the traditional East Asian society is not yet a civil society, a special effect of synergy should be expected. Economic development will contribute to the emergence of democratic institutions, which will stimulate the 'civic virtues' of the inhabitants of the region. The development of 'civil consciousness' will, in turn, contribute to the strengthening of the stability of democratic systems themselves.<sup>13</sup>

Researches who remain faithful to the second of the above-mentioned options, i.e. the 'cultural relativism,' claim - opposing the supporters of modernization - that East Asia is characterized by durability of authoritarian political systems originating from the historically and culturally rooted hierarchical social order. By no means will they disappear along with the modernization of economic systems or changes in the social structure caused by modernization. On the contrary. The rapid dynamics in stratification systems will cause an increase of subjective sense of threat among individuals. In search of safety, societies will even more evidently show the need for a strong central power.<sup>14</sup>

Huntington remarks, assuming a similar point of view, that East Asian states have always needed tradition which would consolidate the state, therefore the concept of the rights of an individual typical for liberalism never had the chance to be present there. What is more important, the Confucian thought identifies the society with the state, and therefore leaves no space for social groups, autonomous towards the state. Undoubtedly, as relativists claim, this feature of the traditional Asian culture is completely out of line with the potential development of democracy in the region.<sup>15</sup>

Moderate supporters of cultural relativism most pessimistically estimate the chances for the Asian democracies to approximate the European prototype. Fareed Zakaria claims that even if East Asian countries manage to overcome the threshold of institutional democratization, it will not necessarily bring about the constitutional liberalism.<sup>16</sup> It may mean that instead of the

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<sup>12</sup> Marc F. Plattner, "From Liberalism to Liberal Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, No. 3/1999, pp. 130-133.

<sup>13</sup> Gerald L. Curtis, *A Recipe for Democratic Development*, in: Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Democracy in...*, p. 222.

<sup>14</sup> Lucian W. Pye, *Civility, Social Capital, and Civil Society in Asia*, in: Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *Patterns of Social Capital: Stability and Change in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 381.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "After Twenty Years: The Future of Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8, No. 4/1997, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 6/1997, p. 28.

expected 'third wave' non-liberal and, in fact, authoritarian political solutions may appear behind the facade of democracy.

Daniel A. Bell, one of the leading researchers in the field of the systems of values in the Confucian domain, sets three characteristics of political culture, conducive to the development of non-liberal systems. These are: the lack of neutral state, techno-paternalism, and state-steered public space together with a dependent civil society. Where traditional Western liberalism recognizes the citizens' right to choose the way the power should be wielded, in a state devoid of neutrality it is the government that decides about the model of doing politics which is most suitable for itself. Thus, the government may freely make attempts to interfere in every aspect of the citizens' lives of reasons known only to itself. Under the rule of techno-paternalism a non-liberal country develops a complex bureaucratic apparatus based on rational principles. Thus, the government creates an administrative system similar to the management of enterprises. Although it is strictly expected to abide by the rules of law, it does not leave much space for the citizens at large to make any decisions. When the public space is steered, the existence of civil society, if it is possible anyway, is put under a strict control of the administration apparatus, and all manifestations of public activity of the citizens are rigorously rationed.<sup>17</sup>

Both the above-mentioned perspectives on the issue of democracy in East Asia, i.e. modernizational and relativistic concepts, assess the dynamics of changes in the region's political systems through the prism of values connected with the tradition of liberal democracy. The third concept - called the communitarian perspective - attempts, at least formally, to eliminate the liberal analytic framework. It also searches for traits of democratization in East Asia, and attempts to mark out its framework in a way different and detached from the liberal tradition. The communitarian definition, contrary to the liberal, attempts to define the role of the state. According to the latter, the existence of the state is based on a social contract of independent individuals. Hence, the aim of state institutions, somehow by definition, is to promote and defend the fundamental individual political rights. However, in the communitarian version, the state is primarily to represent the interest of the society as a whole. Its institutions are set only in the context of communal values. Therefore, the perspective assumes that fulfilling collective aims is prioritized over the interest of an individual. Therefore, the state is identical with the social interest, and has the right to expect all citizens to sacrifice themselves for reaching a common goal. Supporters of the communitarian tradition often

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<sup>17</sup> Daniel A. Bell, David Brown, Kanishka Jayasuriya and David M. Jones, *Toward Illiberal Democracy in Pacific Asia*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995, pp. 163-167.

differentiate between politics in its broader term and a narrowly understood party politics. The 'distribution of power' in a liberal sense among institutional actors of the political scene should be, according to them, replaced with an increased participation of all members of the community.<sup>18</sup> Supporters of this trend admit that although Confucianism is not necessarily the basis for legitimization of authoritarian regimes, it can hardly be ascribed the ability to develop, on its grounds, the Western concepts of human rights or the principles of liberal democracy. In fact, according to communitarians, when it comes to the Confucian thought, we are dealing with a number of ideas such as 'social basis of power' or 'power wielded for the society,' which are close to some principles of procedural democracy in Western societies. Therefore, communitarians suggest that Confucian culture and the broader Asian system of values are the basis that will allow for the interpretation of a fundamental definition of liberal democracy, and make it available for the societies of East Asia.<sup>19</sup>

A number of ideological concepts described as the program of 'Asian values' is also ranked among the communitarian outlook on the issue of democratization of Asia. There is no unanimous canon for what the program is. The basic assumptions of the program were concentrated on the necessity for the rebirth of the traditional system of values – the return to the Asian 'roots' of social identity. They were accompanied not only by the conviction of diversity, but also the 'superiority' of Asian social systems based on communal values, where the interest of the society takes precedence over the interest of an individual, over the 'American' individualism. The concepts of 'Asian values,' which is proven by the form of political discourse on this issue, may be found in a number of articles, speeches, interviews, and books. Elite Asian politicians, who are assumed the 'founding fathers' of the new ideological trend, quite quickly joined the discourse. The concepts of Asian values were proclaimed by the Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew as a new ideology of the restoring Asia, and later they were successfully taken up by the leader of Malaysia – Mahathir bin Mohamad.

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<sup>18</sup> Henry Tam, *Communitarianism: A New Agenda for Politics and Citizenship*, New York: New York University Press, 1998, pp. 12-18.

<sup>19</sup> Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell (eds.), *The East Asian Challenge for Human Right*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999; Theodore de Bary, *Confucianism and Human Rights in China*, in: Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Democracy in...*, pp. 42-56; Theodore de Bary and Weiming Tu (eds.), *Confucianism and Human Rights*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998; Russell A. Fox, "Confucian and Communitarian Responses to Liberal Democracy," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 3/1997, pp. 561-592; David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *The Democracy of the Dead: Dewey, Confucius, and the Hope for Democracy in China*, Chicago: Open Court. Hall & Ames, 1999.

The Bangkok Declaration, signed by the leaders of a number of Asian countries, was an attempt to codify the core of the ideology of 'Asian values.' It concentrated on a few mutually related issues which ought to be mentioned. Firstly, it raised a simple cultural argument, according to which human rights were to result from a particular historical, social, economic, and political context - i.e. that in terms of civilization they have a specific character - and lose their universalisms in the particular conditions, the modern Asian societies live in. Secondly, the declaration also contains argumentation referring to the communitarian nature of Asian societies. According to the argumentation, duties for the family and the community are the core of social life, as opposed to Western individualism and atomistic understanding of the society. If the interest of the community dominates the interest of an individual, exposure of the rights of an individual constitutes a significant threat for the order and harmonious functioning of the society. The declaration also contains an argument of the tradition of voluntary subjugation of the citizens to the discipline in all aspects of social life, including family relations, relations at work and politics. Self-discipline of Asian societies, according to the authors of the declaration, results from a culturally conditioned need to be successful in the economic dimension. From these assumptions comes a conclusion that social and economic rights take precedence over civil and political rights, with an emphasis on the 'right to development.' Lastly, the declaration raises an organic argument which draws attention to the fact that the state and society constitute an indivisible body - with the government wielding power for the common good. As a direct consequence of this statement, all criticism towards the government goes against the interest of the society as a whole.<sup>20</sup> The politicized nature of the debate on Asian values did not, however, result from the pure distinctness of basic cultural elements. Asian values in their ideological sense were often treated instrumentally, and among 'communitarians' themselves they were heavily criticized.<sup>21</sup>

When analyzing the above-mentioned theoretical perspectives empirically, the following versions might be assumed. If the modernizational perspective was true, the values of traditional social culture should diminish, and liberal democracy and its institutional frameworks should be gradually growing

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<sup>20</sup> For example see Mahathir bin Mohamad in: *Asiaweek* on September 8, 1995, p. 42.

<sup>21</sup> Krzysztof Gawlikowski, "Poglądy Mahathira bin Mohamada," *Res Publica Nowa* No. 3/2003; idem, "Problem 'wartości azjatyckich'. Uwagi o koncepcjach Mahathira bin Mohamada," *Azja Pacyfik*, Vol. 2, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 1999; Mahathir bin Mohamad, "Rozważania o wartościach azjatyckich," *Azja Pacyfik*, Vol. 2, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 1999.



in strength. In case the second hypothesis is correct, no significant changes in the political systems of Asian states should accompany maintaining constant framework of the Confucian tradition. Lastly, if the communitarian model was to become the most representative, significant changes in democratization of political structures should be accompanied by traditional systems of values. Undoubtedly, the issue deserves to be looked at more carefully.

### Confucianism and democratization in research

The discourse on the relation between traditional Confucian values and processes of democratization in East Asia receives a growing interest of researchers. Apart from deliberation on the theoretical nature, some of the researchers decided to conduct full fieldwork which would verify the nature of correlation between the models and the real attitude of respondents. American scholar, David I. Hitchcock, from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.), was one of the first researchers who raised the issue of Asian values in the context of their influence on the organization of the system of social relations and the organization of political life in modern countries of East Asia.<sup>22</sup>

In his research on Asian values, he asked a hundred respondents from the U.S. and seven countries of East Asia (China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand) to choose, from two lists, the personal and social values or features that, according to them, were particularly important for the people in their countries. Two out of the five most often chosen values or personal features, as well as two out of the six 'most popular' social values, were put on the list of priorities of both Asians and Americans. The biggest differences in the frequency of American and Asian responses concerned the relative significance they ascribed to "orderly society," "personal freedom," and "rights of the individual." The first of the above-mentioned answers was marked as "particularly important" by 11 percent Americans and 71 percent Asians, the second - 82 percent and 32 percent respectively, and the third - 78 percent and 29 percent respectively.

Further in his research, Hitchcock asked a hundred respondents from East Asian countries and 18 Americans to carefully look through a list of 12 different practices related to governing. The respondents were to circle positions which according to them people in their countries considered "the most important," and mark those which were considered "less important." Hitchcock

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<sup>22</sup> David I. Hitchcock, *Asian Values and the United States: How Much Conflict?*, Washington: CSIS 1994; a detailed translation of fragments from Hitchcock's work was also included in: Adam W. Jelonek (ed.), *Wietnamczycy: systemy wartości, stereotypy Zachodu*, Warszawa: Scholar, 2004.

emphasizes that while arranging the list of practices he had been avoiding such expressions as the 'right to' or 'freedom of,' and attempted to select words which would allow for the highest possible level of objectivity.

Figure 1.1. Social values in Hitchcock's research: Asians and Americans

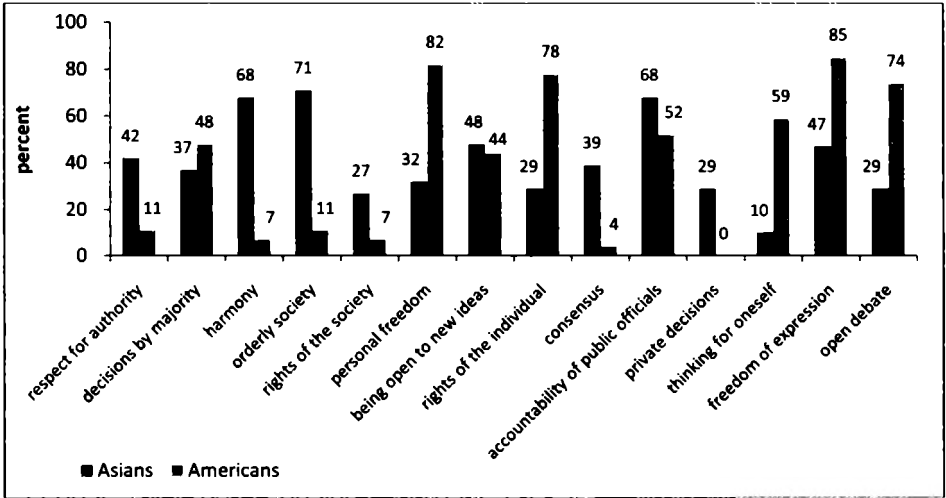
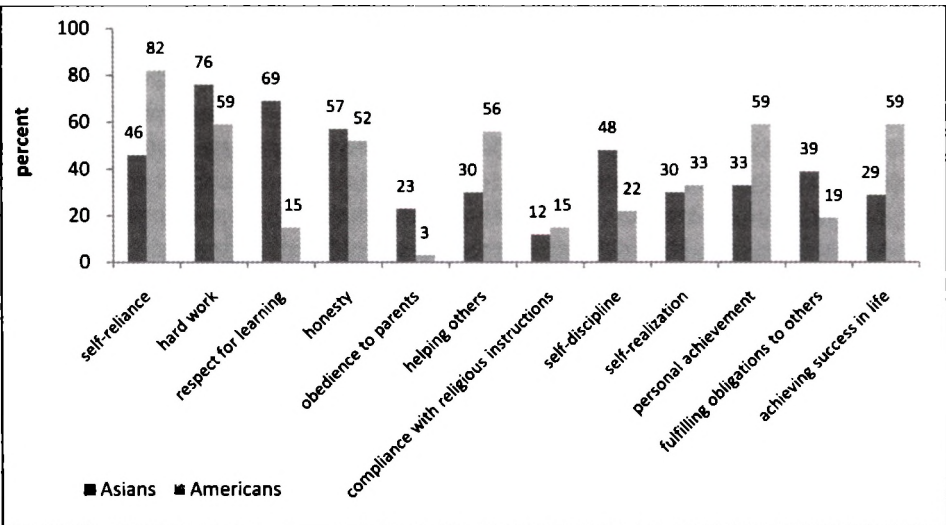


Figure 1.2. Personal values in Hitchcock's research: Asians and Americans



Three out of twelve positions, i.e. "freedom of speech," "choosing leaders in free elections," and "the lack of discrimination due to race, religious belief, skin color, sex, age or physical disability" were marked as "the most important" by a 100 percent Americans. In turn, Asian respondents marked the following answers as the most important: "free elections," "fair payment (in relation to local conditions)," "suitable work conditions and hours," and then "the lack of discrimination." In comparison to Americans, Asians attached a great importance to social order, respect for authorities, harmony which maintains the 'status quo,' and respect for learning. At the same time, both Americans and Asians often marked hard work, honesty, self-realization, responsibility of public officers, and openness to new ideas.

It seems interesting that over 50 percent of the Asian respondents marked as many as nine practices as "the most important," whereby six of them were marked as "the most important" by over 60 percent of the Asian respondents. The following three positions were the least often marked by the respondents from East Asia: "gathering and organizing in groups for various reasons," "quick trial," and "the possibility to refuse to testify against someone."

The practices from Hitchcock's list may be classified into three categories: political, legal, and economic. Respondents from four Asian countries were highly interested in economic practices. "Free elections" were marked as "the most important" by over 70 percent of the respondents from the entire region. In the case of China, however, 39 percent respondents marked them as "the most important" or "less important," and 22 percent did not give any answer. "Freedom of speech" was marked as "the most important," apart from Singapore, by 67 percent respondents from Asia. "The impossibility of being imprisoned without a charge," and "receiving defense during trial" were marked as "the most important" by over 50 percent of the respondents from all Asian countries, again with the exception of Singapore, where prolonged imprisonment without a trial is legal.

In the summary of his research, Professor Hitchcock roughly agreed with the advocates of the 'relativistic' opinion on the dependence between democratization processes and the traditional set of 'Asian values.' According to Hitchcock, the results of the research confirmed the essential distinctness in the hierarchy of values among the Asian and American respondents. Apart from the obvious distinctnesses in the sphere relating to "the practices connected with governing" the image emerging from Hitchcock's surveys shows a fundamental distinctness in what he calls "the world of hidden beliefs" in the issue of personal and social values, and the meaning of some human rights. Hitchcock's research echoed far and wide in the community of the researchers in the field of the issue of 'Asian values,' and their results have repeatedly served as an indication towards the validity of different social and political

systems in the civilizations of the West and East Asia, and probably different directions of their evolutions.

However, the research has raised certain serious methodological objections, which could have had a significant influence on the excessively universal nature of the obtained results. The sample analyzed by Hitchcock was too small to allow for forming far-reaching judgment. Hitchcock, who is American, conducted his research personally, which undoubtedly had an influence on the answers. Moreover, the surveys, which Hitchcock has never been hiding, were conducted among the 'opinion leaders' – politicians, representatives of academic and business circles. The 'opinion leaders' in the East Asian countries, apart from a few exceptions, during answering the questions, were in the middle of a great intercivilizational ideological discussion, when the universalism of the Western values was opposed to the relativism in comprehending the world, proposed by the East. The circles perforce presented an image of the system of values they wanted to see in their own societies. This 'programmatic' subjectivity of the investigated group was surely not conducive to showing the real state of affairs, and the level of rooting of traditional Asian values in modern societies of the region.

In 2003, on the basis of similar research instruments, a group of students from the Institute of Sociology at the Warsaw University together with the Faculty of Social Studies at the National Hanoi University, under my guidance, took up a research on the image of the system of values of the students of the Hanoi University. In our research, we resigned from civilizational overgeneralizations used by Hitchcock, and fixed a simpler project framework. Full anonymity was observed in the research. Moreover, the surveys in Vietnam were conducted by local coworkers, and the respondents were informed that the sole organizer of the research was the Faculty of Social Studies at the National Hanoi University, which allowed for a limitation of possible distortions of the answers.<sup>23</sup>

The analysis of the results of our research indicates significant similarities, but also significant differences, in understanding the hierarchy of values in relation to the published results of David Hitchcock's surveys. The discrepancies, often exceeding 30 percent, have an impact on the configuration of the sets of values mostly marked as important. And so, although among personal values in Hitchcock's research the most often marked were: "hard work," "respect for learning," "personal achievements," "honesty," and "self-discipline," our research – together with "hard work" and "respect for learning," – pointed

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<sup>23</sup> For details see Adam W. Jelonek (ed.) *Wietnamczycy: systemy wartości, stereotypy Zachodu*, Warszawa: Scholar, 2004.

at "independence," "achieving success in life," "helping others," and "honesty" as the most often marked values.

As a rule, the traditional pattern of an individual is questioned only by a radical decline in understanding of the meaning of "self-discipline" as a significant value.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, in the eyes of the young Vietnamese, values indicating an exceptional role of the community, such as "helping others" and respect for parents, fundamental in the Confucian tradition, turn out to be even more important than in the eyes of the Asian elites surveyed by Hitchcock.

Are we, therefore, witnessing a significant change in the self-definition of individuals, and in perceiving social reality? It seems that the results of the researches confirm the thesis: it is proved by the high position of the ascribed variable "achieving success in life." The value was marked by the respondents almost as often as "hard work," "respect for learning," and "self-reliance." (East Asian elites surveyed by Hitchcock marked "success" significantly less often than "hard work:" 29 percent and 76 percent respectively). What could be, however, the meaning of such a change?

Basic personal values proving the vitality of tradition, including the Confucian tradition, seem to be still preserved in the Vietnamese society. Still, a significant part of our respondents marked out "hard work," "respect for learning," "self-reliance," "honesty," and "obedience and respect for parents." And although in comparison to the results obtained by D. Hitchcock, values such as "hard work," "respect for learning," and "honesty" were marked slightly less often, there are no grounds to claim that this group of values significantly diminished in importance. Especially, if it is assumed that although the age and status of the people surveyed by Hitchcock was conducive rather to conservatism in estimating the social importance of traditional values, the young age of the surveyed Vietnamese should rather have been conducive to a certain radicalization of their opinions.

From the point of view of the perspective of the outlook on the existing relations between the traditional system of Confucian values and modernization processes the results of the Vietnamese research, in comparison to the analysis conducted by Hitchcock, may lead to slightly different conclusions. We are dealing here with a process where traditional values are supplemented with new values. Therefore, we receive a coherent and logical entirety where 'traditional values' not only are not superseded by new ones, characteristic of the West, but increase in durability through relating them to goals offered by

<sup>24</sup> Karin Tomala, "Prawa człowieka w Chińskiej Republice Ludowej," in: Karin Tomala and Krzysztof Gawłowski (eds.), *Chiny. Przemiany państwa i społeczeństwa w okresie reform 1978-2000*, Warszawa: Trio, 2001, p. 149.

the new reality. Therefore, duties determined by tradition in this model are related to rights - in this case to the right to achieve success. Success, in the eyes of the young Vietnamese, is not unavoidably related to appreciation of the role of individual achievements. The individualization of goals - evident in pursuing one's own success and in being aware of having rights - does not have to be followed by the individualization of actions, although the theoreticians of individualism often associate individual perspective of goals with an individual way of acting (self-controllability, self-reliance).<sup>25</sup> In the Vietnamese conditions it is still group action - treated not only as a value itself, but as a comfortable and effective means of action - that seems a pragmatically more convenient way to realize own goals.

Significant shifts in relation to the results of Hitchcock's research follow also within the limits of a set of social values most often marked as significant. Values such as "harmony" and "orderly society," most highly marked in Hitchcock's research, were superseded by the "rights of community" and "personal freedom" in the research conducted in Hanoi. Whereas the variable "respect for public servants" was listed the third most often marked in both the researches. A similarly high position is occupied by the variables "respect for the authorities" and "openness to new ideas" in both the researches. A significant difference (20 percent) in indications to personal freedom resulted in the fact that, according to the Vietnamese students, it is not ranked among the set of the most significant values. 48 percent of indications to "solving arguments by public debate" puts this social value on the fifth place, due to the number of indications.

As much as 65 percent of indications to "personal freedom" are an earnest of a growing significance of the ethics of law (as compared to 31 percent in Hitchcock's research; in the results of the Vietnamese research it is also the most often indicated value). The fact that the surveyed students omitted the values which were highly estimated by the respondents in D. Hitchcock's research, also seems to be equally significant. These values are: "harmony" (28 percent in comparison to 58 percent in Hitchcock's research), "orderly society" (28 percent in comparison to 71 percent), and "consensus" (12.3 percent in comparison to 39 percent). According to the American researcher, particular respect for these values constituted the most fundamental feature of the 'Asian' perspective of perceiving the public sphere, and was also the key to understand the role of an individual in East Asian society.

Some new research hypotheses take shape in the light of the Vietnamese research. A simple version of the 'relativism' of political systems emerging

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<sup>25</sup> See Peter L. Berger, *Rewolucja kapitalistyczna*. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 1995, pp. 167-168.

from Hitchcock's research seems to be, in this case, unconfirmed. Global transformations and their reception among the Vietnamese youth seem to prove the occurrence of the process of hybridization, i.e. supplementing the traditional Confucian values with selectively treated values, adopted from the world of the 'liberal' West. If we limited ourselves only to the level of axiology on the analytic ground, the results of the Vietnamese research could have induced us to the communitarian or modernizational option as true. We should not forget, however, that both theoretical variants, apart from accepting the hybridized nature of the evolution of the system of values, also assumed significant transformations of the framework of constitutional order, towards the universal or at least 'Asian model of democracy.' The lack, at least for now, of any traits of even a procedural minimum of democracy principles in the Vietnamese political system forced us to verify our hypotheses in the next research project.

### **Liberal and Confucian values in Poland and Taiwan**

I decided to verify the hypothesis on the communitarian or modernizational direction of transformation of democratic values by analyzing the durability of the traditional Confucian system of values, in relation to the case of a country with established democratic procedures - commonly recognized as one of the leaders of Huntington's 'third wave' in Asia, i.e. Taiwan. The research conducted in Taiwan was related to the analysis of the system of values of the Polish society - representing the Western culture, where the democratic procedures, however, appeared more or less at the same time as in the Asian counterpart.

Taiwan - one of the famous 'Asian tigers,' apart from having spectacular economic successes, has become the scene for many transformations in the political life over a span of recent years. Rapidly ensuing reforms of the main institutions of public life, initiated in 1996, were equivalent to the transformation of the model of political scene - from an authoritarian state, through different types of transitional stages ('limited democracy'), towards the full democratic system, entirely based on patterns adopted from the West. Such a revolutionary change of the country's system is considered an unprecedented event by political scientists.<sup>26</sup>

In 1949, the activists of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT), after losing to communist forces and fleeing from the mainland China, made an

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<sup>26</sup> Linda Chao and Ramon H. Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan*, Washington: NCCI, 1998; Cal Clark, *Taiwan's Development: Implications for Contending Political Economy Paradigms (Contributions in Economics and Economic History)*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

attempt to establish their own strategic stronghold in Taiwan. Only a few observers believed that anyone would have managed to create an efficiently functioning economy and civil administrative structures there, the more so build foundations of a democratic system. The concerns, as it turned out, were hardly justified. The way the significant changes occurred in the state's political system was also a surprise for the researchers in the field of democratization processes. Completely differently from the case of democratic systems in Latin America or Eastern Europe, the Taiwanese democratization processes took place by a gradual ceding of power by the ruling Nationalist Party (KMT). It was the party that initiated significant political reforms. The gradual opening of political scene did not lead, as opposed to the majority of cases of Huntington's 'third wave,' to serious breakdowns of the system of state power, neither did it cause a deep economic crisis. Being aware of the slowly rising opposition, the authorities connected with KMT willingly initiated political liberalization and the gradual sharing of power, and finally crowned the process with a complete democratization of the country. It was KMT that negotiated, struggled for compromises, and reached an agreement with the opposition parties, making the progress of democratization irreversible. The authoritarian party became the key force of the country's democratization. It was thanks to the party that in the 1980s the ban for political parties' functioning was lifted, and basic civic liberties and freedoms were introduced. At the end of 1991, first free elections to the National Assembly took place, in December 1992 - to the Parliament (the Legislative Yuan), in December 1994 - the first general elections for provinces' governors, and in March 1996 - the first presidential elections. The example of Taiwan seemed significant, since it allowed verifying how the system of values esteemed by the society was similar to the liberal pattern, and how close it was to the traditional Confucian model, with a simultaneous appliance of the 'democratic rules of the game.' Despite some reservations about the nature of the Taiwanese democracy and its allegedly 'Asian' shape it should be emphatically stated that the constitutional and procedural solutions implemented there satisfy all criteria mentioned in the normative model of Dahl's polyarchy - recognized by almost everyone as an institutional model of modern democracies.<sup>27</sup>

The used research procedure did not differ much from the one adopted in the research of 2003. It was based again on the model of survey used before in Hitchcock's work based on the opposition of traditional Confucian values

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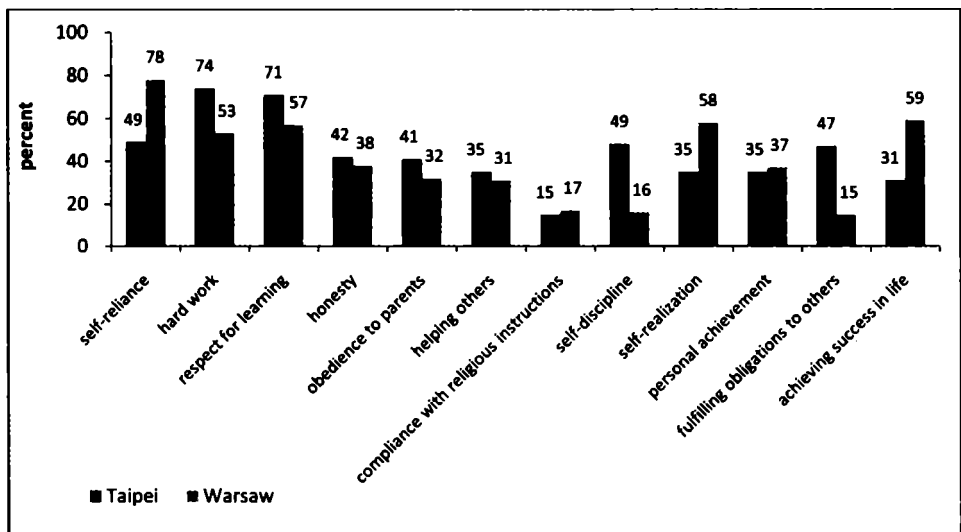
<sup>27</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971; see also Adam W. Jelonek, *Dynamika kryzysu tajwańskiej demokracji. W cieniu wyborów prezydenckich i referendum 2004*, in: Marian Broda and Marek Dziekan (eds.), *Oblicza Wschodu*, Łódź: Instytut Studiów Międzynarodowych UŁ, Elipsa, 2004.



and the idealized liberal values of the West. The Taiwanese research was conducted from October to December 2007 on a quota sample of 418 students (215 women and 203 men). It embraced the three main academic centers in the city (two state universities: the National Taiwan University and National Chengchi University, and the private Tamkang University). The second part of the research consisted of surveys conducted on a sample of students at universities in Warsaw. In the period from March to May, 463 persons were surveyed, including 240 women and 223 men. The research was conducted in the largest public universities in the capital, including the University of Warsaw, Warsaw University of Technology, Warsaw School of Economics, and the private Bogdan Jański Academy.

Although the conducted research recorded only the actuality of one period of time, and therefore did not allow for drawing conclusions about the course of the processes of social and modernizational transformations of political values, one should expect that during the two decades of democracy significant interactions between the sphere of axiology and political praxis should have occurred.

Figure 1.3. Personal values in the surveys of students in Taiwan and Poland

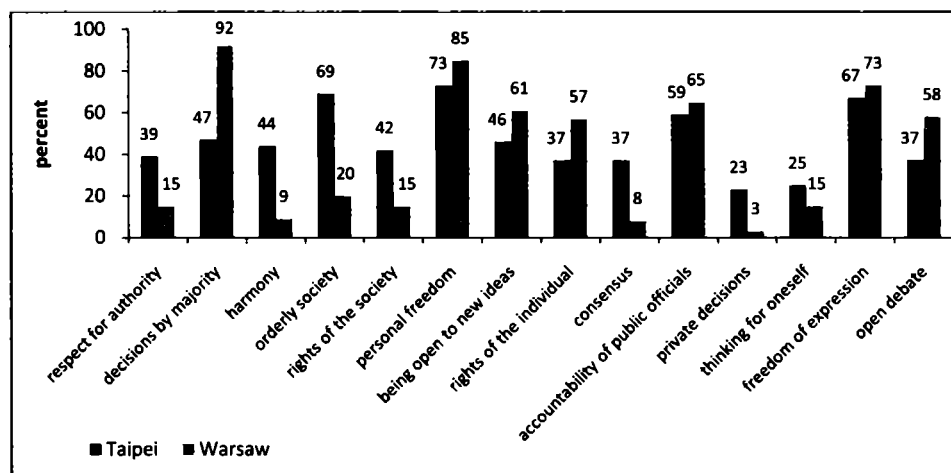


The results of the research incline us to draw some interesting conclusions. In the case of personal values, in almost all answers of the Taiwanese

respondents, we are dealing with an equal or more frequent indication to values from the group of the "traditional Confucian values," than in the case of Hitchcock's research and the research in Hanoi. "Hard work" was marked by 74.3 percent of the respondents - a little less than in Hitchcock's research, but a lot more than in the case of the Vietnamese research. Indications to such typically Confucian values as "respect for learning" - 71.1 percent, "obedience to parents" - 41.1 percent, "self-discipline" - 33.2 percent, and "fulfilling duties to others" - 47.2 percent, are higher or significantly higher in comparison to both the Vietnamese survey and the research conducted by the American scholar. The values from the group of the 'liberal West' marked as significant by the Taiwanese respondents oscillate around those given in the previous research in the area of East Asia. 49.2 percent indicated "self-discipline," 36.3 percent - "self-realization," 34.8 percent - "personal achievement," and 31.7 percent - "success in life." It is worth noting that for the comparative group of the Polish students, the system of values in many places resembles the paradoxically idealized model of the 'traditional Confucian values' a lot more than the model of 'liberal West.' In some cases, such as "self-reliance" - 77.3 percent, "fulfilling obligations to others" - 14.6 percent, and individual "success in life" - 59.4 percent, the Polish students efficiently 'catch up' with the American respondents, but in the case of values such as "respect for learning" - 56.4 percent, "hard work" - 52.8 percent, and "obedience to parents" - 32 percent, Polish respondents seem, at least in their answers, to be very 'Confucian.' Coming back, however, to the analysis of the influence of democratization on a hypothetical transformation of the system, it seems that at least in the observed temporal horizon it remained almost unchanged. It should additionally be emphasized that in both researches the respondents were students, i.e. people born or at least brought up in the framework of a new democratic political reality.

The results of the second part of the survey analyzing social values, seem even more interesting from the point of view of our reflections on the relations between the Asian values and liberal democracy. Already at first glance we can see that the system of values of the Taiwanese youth in most dimensions does not much stray off the system of values represented by the respondents of Hitchcock's research or the "Vietnam 2003" research. Values of the Confucian group such as "respect for authorities" - 39.1 percent, "harmony" - 44 percent, "consensus" - 37.2 percent, and "rights of the society" - 42.4 percent were placed relatively highly, while the values of the liberal group such as "solving arguments by the public debate" - 31.6 percent and "thinking of oneself" - 25.4 percent were placed fairly low.

Figure 1.4. Social values among the Taiwanese and Polish students



At the same time, however, one can observe a significant intensification of some variables from the group of 'liberal values' such as "decisions by majority" - 46.7 percent, "personal freedom" - 73.3 percent, and "freedom of expression" - 67.4 percent.

In comparison to the values esteemed by the Polish youth, Taiwanese students acknowledged significantly different values from the group of the 'traditional Confucian values.' The largest differences could be observed in ascribing importance to such variables as "orderly society" (49 percent), "harmony" (35 percent), "rights of the society" (27 percent), and "consensus" (29 percent). For the Polish respondents, part of the terms proposed in the survey might have seemed incomprehensible. Due to their actual absence in public discourse, the terms might additionally have subjectively 'lost' their meaning. In some cases, they could also have been differently interpreted which results from a different cultural context (such as "solving arguments by private settlement"). We should, however, focus the attention upon our analysis of dependencies between traditional Confucian values and procedural democracy on the fact that most of the values given to the respondents in the 'liberal' group are considered extremely important in both societies. Whereas differences, with regard to different cultures and political traditions, seem quite insignificant (apart from the variable "decisions made by the majority"). Their occurrence may be the result of a deeply rooted Confucian tradition, but other alternative explanations may also be found.

The results of comparative researches in Taipei and Warsaw, as well as conclusions drawn from the former researches of Hitchcock and project Vietnam 2003, place the issue of political changes occurring in the East Asian countries in an enticing light. They also sketch an interesting perspective of mutual dependencies between Confucianism and liberal democracy, its constitutional procedures in the least. It is difficult, relying on the gathered research material, to entirely believe in the vision of the world of politics in both the civilizations - liberal West and Confucian East - proposed by cultural relativists. It is also difficult to be convinced about the existence of the alleged inner blockades for the development of democracy in the traditional systems of Asian values, suggested by relativists. Moreover, the research conducted in Taiwan shows that the arguments about the communitarian nature of political constructs in Asia seem doubtful. Naturally, it is difficult to question the presence of community values in Asian societies. In the sphere of personal values, partly social values as well, after all they are still quite obviously present in the answers of the Taiwanese respondents. However, we cannot draw an unambiguous conclusion - as suggested by the advocates of communitarianism - that they shape political systems unidirectionally, since we are also dealing with a reverse process. As the Taiwanese research shows, democratic procedures undoubtedly adopted from the West very clearly shape the variables, significant for political systems, in the systems of values. Moreover, the communitarian 'Asian democracy' - a characteristic 'third way' also proposed by the above-mentioned advocates of the ideological version of the Asian values, is an underspecified and speculative term, hence it is difficult to put it through a rational empirical analysis.

The obtained results may suggest that the modernization model was accurate. However, one should be careful with passing explicit opinions. The binary vision of communal hierarchical social reality of the East, opposed to individualistic liberal Western society, proposed once by modernists and relativists, and referred to by Hitchcock, is already the insufficient context for an accurate analysis of transformations occurring on the axiological level. Although relying on the received statistic data, we can establish the reduction of the impact of traditional social model based on harmony and social concord, the received data do not allow for drawing an unambiguous conclusion that the change, in this case, consisted in a clear shift of the respondents' declarations to the sphere of the 'Western system of values.' The multitude and abundance of relations between different aspects of the society's culture and organization, makes it insufficient to talk about them in the categories of adopting models and adapting in the native culture. In the world which undergoes a constant process of globalization, however, there are many different mechanisms that are conducive to popularization of the solutions of procedural democracy, which was often emphasized

by the modernists. There is as well a barrier for the spread of the models of Western liberal democracy, and almost everyone is aware of that. On the basis of the presented research material it is difficult to believe that traditional system of values will, however, be the most significant barrier.

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